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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)  
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: KOSOVO SERBS SKEPTICAL ABOUT PROPOSED  
ALL-SERB CONGRESS

REF: PRISTINA 924

Classified By: COM TINA S. KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY. Croatian MP Dr. Milorad Pupovac is discretely working at the behest of Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku to organize an all-Kosovo Serb Congress to unify Kosovo Serbs and help them better represent themselves. Kosovo Serbs are skeptical about this endeavor, and key leaders are split over whether to participate. Even if only some key Serbs participate, the Congress could provide an important and timely forum for them to consider jointly their future in Kosovo. END SUMMARY.

Pupovac Effort Supported by PM Ceku

[¶2.](#) (C) Croatian MP Dr. Milorad Pupovac (himself an ethnic Serb) explained his proposal for an "All Kosovo Serb Congress" at a November 22 meeting, sponsored by OSCE, with Pristina liaison office representatives. Pupovac described the Kosovo Serb population as fragmented, disoriented and disorganized, and said that the Congress will provide a forum in which they can gather, discuss challenges facing their community and come up with their own solutions. (NOTE. A similar initiative was also proposed by Nenad Radosavlejevic, the Kosovo Serb owner and director of Leposavic-based TV Mir (reftel). END NOTE) At the meeting, Prime Minister Agim Ceku said that he asked the OSCE to engage Pupovac in this effort, and extended his full support to the initiative.

[¶3.](#) (C) Pupovac said he has traveled extensively around Kosovo over the past four months and believes he has gained the trust of local Serb leaders. He stressed that the Congress is not an attempt to unify Kosovo Serbs under one political party, but rather to create an "umbrella" organization that will incorporate a plurality of political options. When pressed by skeptical attendees to explain how he will convince northern hard-liners to participate, Pupovac responded enigmatically, "you will see." Pupovac mentioned that, regardless of status, Kosovo Serbs need to organize themselves politically.

Some Kosovo Serbs Willing, Others Less So

14. (C) On December 4, moderate Kosovo Serb members of the Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) Oliver Ivanovic, Goran Bogdanovic and Randjel Nojkic shared their views with us about the initiative. Ivanovic said he will participate in the Congress and is actively involved in the planning. He added that Pupovac accepted his proposal to postpone the event, which will probably take place at the Narcis hotel in Strpce, until just after the January 21 Serbian parliamentary election. According to Ivanovic, there will be approximately 150 invitees, including leaders from all segments of the Kosovo Serb community: SLKM, Serbian National Council (SNC) hard-liners, MPs, party leaders, and elected municipal leaders and village presidents, as well as influential Kosovo Serb members of the media, Serbian Orthodox Church and key NGOs. Ivanovic suggested that it would be a powerful message if the Congress meets and calls on the SLKM to rejoin the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG).

15. (C) Nojkic, in contrast, said the Congress is a bad idea that could divide Kosovo's Serbs into northern and southern camps. He stressed that it should only provide a forum for discussion and not have any greater political agenda. Nojkic complained that Pupovac is ignoring Belgrade and accused him of working for Ceku, while Ivanovic defended Pupovac, saying he is working for the OSCE, not Ceku. Bogdanovic complained that instead of consulting him and his Belgrade-based (under Serbian President Boris Tadic) Democratic Party (DS) on this initiative, Pupovac is instead focusing on "weak, non-relevant" political factors, like the newer Kosovo-based parties formed by Slobodan Petrovic and Dragisa Miric (who were also present for the discussion). Ignoring the insult, Petrovic countered that he thinks the initiative is a good

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idea.

16. (C) Other key Kosovo Serbs have also expressed skepticism about Pupovac, saying that Croatia has not successfully integrated its own Serbs, and claiming that there is nothing positive Kosovo Serbs can learn from that experience. Hard-line Mitrovica municipal SNC head Nebojsa Jovic told us that the initiative is "a waste of precious time and energy." President of the Kosovo-based Serbian People's Party (SNS) Mihailo Sceanovic told us that Kosovo Serbs need one of their own to unite them, not a Serb from Croatia, who is -- in Sceanovic's words -- among those who have failed to ensure the full return of displaced Serbs to that nation. Sceanovic called the entire program a "marketing effort" by the PISG to improve their image and show that they are doing something to integrate Kosovo Serbs. He said the only reason the PISG has succeeded in fulfilling some standards, mostly on paper, is because of intense pressure from the international community.

Comment

17. (C) The Pupovac effort strikes as a good idea, but one whose execution might prove impossible due to the the many conflicting agendas at play: Belgrade vs. Kosovo, north vs. south, integrationists vs. rejectionists, plus the host of strong Serb and Albanian personalities involved. Kosovo Serb suspicions -- largely well-founded -- that PM Ceku lies behind this initiative may also condemn it to oblivion. Ceku and Pupovac are aware of this, and have kept their relations low-key. The Congress could theoretically provide a timely forum for Kosovo Serbs to gather and discuss their common future and objectives, and perhaps even overcome some of their differences, but the odds are against a fully successful, sustained endeavor to unite Kosovo's Serb community in the run-up to status. END COMMENT.

18. (U) Post clears this message in its entirety for release to Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.  
KAIDANOW